CLAIMS

1. Process for preparing alkali- and heat-stable sugar alcohol compositions which exhibits an optical density lower than or equal to 0,100 in an S-test, **characterised in that** a sugar alcohol composition is treated with a strong base anion exchange resin in the hydroxide form, at a temperature between 30 °C and 100 °C.

2. Process according to claim 1, **characterised in that** in said process the sugar alcohol composition is fed to a column-system containing a strong base anion exchange resin in the hydroxide form with a volume throughput of ≤ 6 bed volumes (BV)/hour.

3. Process according to claim 2, **characterised in that** a single column-system is used.

4. Process according to claim 2, **characterised in that** a multiple column-system is used, in which at least part of the columns of the system is used in a regeneration mode, while the remaining columns are used in a service mode, comprising the steps of stabilisation and simultaneous decolourisation.

5. Process according to any one of claims 2 to 4, **characterised in that** the volume throughput is between 0,1 and 1 BV/hour.

6. Process according to claim 5, **characterised in that** the volume throughput is between 0,2 and 0,8 BV/hour.

7. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 6, **characterised in that** said sugar alcohol composition has a conductivity value less than 100 µS/cm before treatment with the strong base anion exchange resin.

8. Process according to claim 7, **characterised in that** said sugar alcohol composition has a conductivity less then 50 µS/cm before treatment with the strong base anion exchange resin.

9. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 8, **characterised in that** said strong base anion exchange resin belongs to the thermally stable-type category.

10. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 8, **characterised in that** said strong base anion exchange resin is of the styrenic type I, type II or type III.

11. Process according to any of claims 1 to 8, **characterised in that** said strong base anion exchange resin is of the acrylic resin type.

12. Process according to claim 10 or 11, **characterised in that** when using a styrenic type I or type III, or an acrylic type resin, a column temperature is used between 45 °C and 70 °C.

13. Process according to claim 11, **characterised in that** when using a styrenic type II resin, a column temperature is used which is less than 45 °C.

14. Process according to claim 10, **characterised in that** when using a thermally stable resin, a column temperature is used which is more than 75 °C.

15. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 14, **characterised in that** said sugar alcohol composition is prepared by hydrogenating a starch hydrolysate, obtained from an acid conversion, a combined acid-enzymatic conversion or a multiple enzyme conversion of starch.

16. Process according to any one of claims 1 to 14, **characterised in that** said sugar alcohol composition is prepared by hydrogenating reducing sugars belonging to

the categories of keto- or aldopentoses, keto- or aldohexoses, disaccharides or non-starch oligosaccharide mixtures.

17. Process according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** said sugar alcohol composition has a pH-value between 8,5 and 9,5 when sorting from the strong base anion exchange resin.

18. Sorbitol composition containing at least 95% sorbitol on dry substance and exhibiting an optical density lower than 0,02 in an S-test.

19. Sorbitol composition according to claim 18, characterised in that it contains at least 99 % sorbitol on dry substance and exhibits an optical density of lower than 0,01 in an S-test.